

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A computer implemented method for controlling automated selling of multiple items through an online auction service implemented by one or more networked servers, comprising:
  - listing for sale with the online auction service a first item, including posting to the one or more networked servers a first reserve price corresponding to a first target sale price, a first proposed starting price set equal to or less than the first reserve price, and a first listing duration for the first item;
- 10 listing for sale with the online auction service a second item, in response to a demand event occurring within the online auction service with respect to the first item, including posting to the one or more networked servers a second reserve price corresponding to a second target sale price, and a second proposed starting price set equal to or less than the second reserve price for the second item; and
- 15 associating for the one or more networked servers, the first item with the second item.

  

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising featuring the first item with the online auction service, including posting a feature request with the one or more networked servers.

  

- 20 3. The method of claim 2 further comprising listing an additional item coincident with the first item with the online auction service, including posting to the one or more networked servers a third reserve price associated with a third target sale price, and a third proposed starting price set equal to or below the third reserve price for the additional item.

  

- 25 4. The method of claim 3 wherein the listing of the additional item further comprises posting to the one or more networked servers a listing duration for the additional item that is shorter than the first listing duration of the featured first item.

5. The method of claim 3 further comprising featuring a currently listed item when a demand event associated with the featured first item occurs, including posting to the one or more networked servers a feature request for the currently listed item.

5 6. The method of claim 3 further comprising:

identifying a listing start time for a listed item, including posting to the one or more networked servers the listing start time for the listed item ; and

determining a listing duration for the listed item based at least in part upon the identified listing start time, including posting to the one or more networked

10 servers the listing duration for the listed item.

7. The method of claim 6 further comprising:

defining a plurality of time slots within a given period of available selling time for the listed item, including posting to the one or more networked servers definitions of the time slots;

15 identifying one of the plurality of time slots corresponding to the listing start time, including posting to the one or more networked servers an identification of the time slot ; and

determining automatically the listing duration based at least in part upon the identified time slot, using one or more computing devices.

20 8. The method of claim 7 wherein a given period of available selling time is one day.

9. The method of claim 7 wherein the automatic determining the listing duration for a time slot comprises:

tracking a number of items that have had their reserve prices met during

25 each time slot, using one or more of the computing devices; and

dividing a time length of the time slot by the number of items that have had their reserve prices met during the time slot. Using one or more of the computing devices.

10. The method of claim 7 further comprising listing a new featured item when a current listing duration of a item exceeds the determined listing duration for a corresponding time slot. Including posting a listing request to the one or more networked server.
- 5 11. The method of claim 1 wherein the method further comprising posting to the one or more networked servers the first item as an immediately purchasable item.
12. The method of claim 1 wherein the demand event occurs when a bid at least equals the first reserve price.
- 10 13. The method of claim 1 wherein the first item corresponds to a first class of items and the second item corresponds to a second class of items.
14. The method of claim 13 wherein at least one of the first class and second class of items comprises an advertising class.
15. The method of claim 13 wherein the first class of items comprises featured items and the second class of items comprises non-featured items.
16. An article of manufacture comprising:
  - a computer readable storage medium; and
  - computer executable instructions stored in the storage medium, and
  - designed to enable a computing device to practice the computer implemented method of claim 1.
17. A computing apparatus for controlling selling of items through an online auction service, the computing apparatus comprising:
  - means for listing for sale with an online auction service a first item, the online auction service being implemented by one or more networked servers, the listing including posting to the one or more networked servers a first reserve price

corresponding to a first target sale price, a first proposed starting price set equal to or less than the first reserve price, and a first listing duration for the first item;

means for listing for sale with the online auction service a second item, in response to a demand event occurring within the online auction service with

5 respect to the first item, including positng to the one or more networked servers a second reserve price corresponding to a second target sale price, and a second proposed starting price set equal to or less than the second reserve price for the second item; and

means for associating for the one or more networked servers, the first item

10 with the second item.

18. A system comprising

a communication interface;

one or more storage units to store executable instructions designed to

enable the system to

15 list for sale with an online auction service a first item, the online auction service being implemented by one or more networked servers, the listing including posting to the one or more networked servers a first reserve price corresponding to a first target sale price, a first proposed starting price set equal to or less than the first reserve price, and a first listing duration for the first item,

20 list for sale with the online auction service a second item, in response to a demand event occurring within the online auction service with respect to the first item, including positng to the one or more networked servers a second reserve price corresponding to a second target sale price, and a second proposed starting price set equal to or less than the second reserve price for the second item,

25 and

associate for the one or more networked servers, the first item with the second item; and

30 one or more processors coupled to the communication interface and the storage unit to execute the executable instructions.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein the instructions are further designed to enable the system to feature the first item with the online auction service, including posting a feature request with the one or more networked servers.

20. The system of claim 19, wherein the instructions are further designed to 5 enable the system to list an additional item coincident with the first item with the online auction service, including posting to the one or more networked servers a third reserve price associated with a third target sale price, and a third proposed starting price set equal to or below the third reserve price for the additional item.

21. The system of claim 18 wherein the instructions are further designed to 10 enable the system to post to the one or more networked servers the first item as an immediately purchasable item.

22. The system of claim 18 wherein the demand event occurs when a bid at least equals the first reserve price.